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Extracts from the Southern Literary Messenger.

THE MECHANIC ARTS, AND EVERET'S ADDRESS.*

In September last, the 'Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association' held, in Boston, an exhibition of machines, implements, and fabrics, recently produced by the mechanic arts; and at the same time held a fair, at which many articles made for the occasion, were sold: the profits of the exhibition and fair being applied to the charitable uses for which, mainly, the Association was formed. In variety, richness, and depth of interest, no exhibition of the kind, probably, ever surpassed, if any ever equalled, this one. 'More than fifteen thousand articles, in almost every department of art,' were displayed to the wonder-stricken eye. Specimens of manufacture the most rare, of machinery the most ingenious, courted attention on every hand. Agricultural implements, the tools proper to a hundred different trades, steam engines,—all presenting some useful or curious invention or improvement—filled the most knowing beholder with new admiration for a fertility of mind and cunningness of hand, which seemed here to have been well nigh superhumanly creative. Foremost of wonders, was the model of Davenport's electro-magnetic engine; applying the power of the loadstone to drive machinery. The model was of sufficient force to work a turner's lathe; and judicious observers, after examining its principles of action, deemed it easily susceptible of such increase in power, while it might remain so portable and cheap, as to be far superior to those hitherto matchless agents, water and steam. The throng of spectators was proportioned to the attractiveness of the sight. Daily, for eight or ten days, thousands crowded the immense halls of the exhibition. The city, and the neighboring villages and towns, poured out almost their entire population. By the fifth or sixth day, sixty thousand people were supposed to have been admitted; and the sum received for admittances alone, was reckoned at twelve or fifteen thousand dollars.

The occasion was seized, to elicit the Address mentioned above. Its objects were, to swell the charity fund (for each auditor paid an admittance fee,) and to impress mechanics and all others with a just sense of the dignity and importance of the mechanic arts. But there is one circumstance, especially worthy of notice. The author of the Address,—who, from the manner in which the title page mentions him ('Edward Everett, an Honorary member,' &c.) might be taken for merely some retired master mechanic,—is the distinguished Governor of Massachusetts; and even less distinguished by that title, than as an enlightened member of Congress, an eloquent orator, and an accomplished scholar: confessedly, one of the foremost men of that State, itself among the foremost in this confederacy.

The following paragraph displays the wonderful increase of man's power, from the use of machines, and other material agents:

"Man, with his unaided strength, can lift but one or two hundred weight, and that but for a moment; with his pulleys and windlasses, he sets an obelisk upon its base,—a shaft of solid granite a hundred feet high. The dome of St. Peter's is one hundred and twenty feet in diameter, its sides are twenty-two feet in thickness, and it is suspended in the air at an elevation of three hundred and twenty feet from the ground,—and it was raised by hands as feeble as these. The unaided force of the muscles of the human hand is insufficient to break a fragment of marble, of any size, in pieces; but, on a recent visit to the beautiful quarries in Sheffield, from which the columns of the Girard College at Philadelphia are taken, I saw masses of hundreds of tons, which had been cleft from the quarry by a very simple artificial process. Three miles an hour, for any considerable space of time, and with ample intervals for recreation, food, and sleep, are the extreme limit of the locomotive capacity of the strongest frame, and this confined to the land. The *arts* step in: by the application of one portion of them to the purposes of navigation, man is wafted, night and day, alike waking and sleeping, at the rate of eight or ten miles an hour, over the unfathomed ocean; and by the combination of another portion of the arts, he flies at the rate of fifteen or twenty miles an hour, and, if need be, with twice that rapidity, without moving a muscle, from city to city. The capacity of imparting thought, by intelligible signs, to the minds of other men,—the capacity which lies at the foundation of all our social improvements,—while unaided by art, was confined within the limits of oral communication and memory. The voice of wisdom perished, not merely with the sage by whom it was uttered, but with the very breath of air on which it was borne. *Art* came to the aid of the natural capacity; and, after a long series of successive improvements, passing through the stages of pictorial and symbolical representations of things,—the different steps of hieroglyphical writing, (each occupying, no doubt, long periods of time for its discovery and application,)—it devised a method of imprinting on a material substance an intelligible sign, not of things, but of sounds forming the names of things; in other words, it invented the A B C. With this simple invention, and the mechanical contrivances with which it is carried into effect, the mind of man was, I had almost said, re-created. The day before it was invented, the voice of man, in its utmost stretch, could be heard but by a few thousands, intently listening for an hour or two, during which alone his strength would enable him to utter a succession of sounds. The day after the art of writing was invented, he stamps his thoughts on a roll of parchment, and they reach every city and hamlet of the largest empire. The day before this invention, and the mind of one country was estranged from the mind of all other countries. For almost all the purposes of intercourse, the families of man might as well not have belonged to one race. The day after it, and Wisdom was endued with the gift of tongues, and spake by her interpreters to all the tribes of kindred men. The day before this invention, and nothing but a fading tradition, constantly becoming fainter, could be preserved by the memory, of all that was spoken or acted by the greatest and wisest of men. The day after it, Thought was imperishable; it sprung to an earthly immortality; it seized the new-found instruments of record and commemoration, and, deserting the body as it sunk with its vocal organs into the dust, it carved on the very gravestone, "The mind of man shall live forever."

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We dare say most of our readers will find something new to them in the passage we are now going to quote, touching the progress of certain improvements in one familiar art.

"It is not yet, I believe, more than two or three centuries, since the only mode of spinning known was by the rock and spindle. The simple spinning-wheel, moved by the hand, and which was thought, in the times of our grandparents, to show a graceful form and a well-turned arm to nearly as much advantage as a harp at the present day, and to make a music almost as cheerful, is at once an obsolete and a modern invention. The Greeks and Romans are said to have been unacquainted with the spinning-wheel. The monarch's heavy purple and the nymph's airy tissue were alike manufactured by twirling the distaff, and drawing out a thread with the fingers; and no improvement was made on this tedious process, in Great Britain, before the fifteenth century. It is evident that much more labor must have been requisite, with this rude machinery, to supply the indispensable article of clothing, than with the modern improvements. The introduction of the spinning-wheel produced a great economy of this labor; but the introduction of the spinning and weaving machinery of the last century, has pushed this economy to an extent, at which it is vain to attempt to calculate it. This economy operates, first, to multiply the comforts of the existing population, and then, by necessary consequence, to increase the population capable of subsisting in a given circuit. Yes, the man who, in the infancy of the arts, invented the saw or the plane, the grindstone, the vice, or the hand-mill; and those who, in later periods, have contributed to the wonderful system of modern machinery, are entitled to rank high among the benefactors of mankind,—the fathers of civilization,—the creators, I had almost said, of nations. No, it is not the fabulous wand of the enchanter, it is the weaver's beam, and instruments like it, which call thousands and tens of thousands into being. Mind, acting through the useful arts, is the vital principle of modern civilized society. The mechanician, not the magician, is now the master of life. He kindles the fires of his steam engine,—the rivers, the lakes, the ocean, are covered with flying vessels; mighty chain-pumps descend, clanking and groaning, to the deepest abysses of the coal mine, and rid them of their deluging waters; and spindles and looms ply their task as if instinct with life. It is the necromancy of the creative machinist. In a moment a happy thought crosses his imagination,—an improvement is conceived. Some tedious process can be superseded by a chemical application, as in the modern art of bleaching. Some necessary result can be attained, in half the time, by a new mechanical contrivance;—another wheel—a ratchet—a screw will effect the object; he tries a few experiments; it will succeed: it is done. He stamps his foot, and a hundred thousand men start into being; not, like those which sprung from the fabled dragon's teeth, armed with the weapons of destruction, but furnished with every implement for the service and comfort of man. It is stated by James Watt, (before whose time the steam engine was an imperfect and inefficient machine,) that the moment the notion of 'separate condensation" struck him, all the other details of his improved engine followed in rapid and immediate succession, so that, in the course of a day, his invention was so complete that he proceeded to submit it to experiment.* Could that day be identified, it would well deserve an anniversary celebration by the universal tribes of civilized man."

Sentimentalists have complained of "the mechanical tendency" of the present age, as having an unfavorable influence upon morals and intellect. Mr. Everett vindicates the mechanic arts from this imputation; regarding their intellectual and moral influences as among their happiest results. We cannot abridge his observations without greater injustice to them and to our readers, than we are willing to burthen our conscience with. The manner in which, at the close of the following extract, he is 'warned back from his digression' by his watch, equals those happy transitions adduced by Dugald Stewart† from Thomson, Goldsmith, and Virgil.

"The immediate result of every improvement in these arts, as has been already stated, often is, and always might and should be, by making less labor and time necessary for the supply of human wants, to raise the standard of comfortable living,—increase the quantity of leisure time applicable to the culture of the mind,—and thus promote the intellectual and moral progress of the mass of the community. That this is the general tendency of a progress in the useful arts, no one can doubt, who compares the present condition of the world with its condition in the middle ages; and the fact is confirmed by the history of single inventions. I have already spoken of alphabetical writing. Pliny remarks of the Egyptian reed, (the first material of which paper was made,) that on this reed rested the immortality of man. The thought, though savoring of heathenism in the expression, is just. The single art of alphabetical writing was a step absolutely essential in the moral and intellectual progress of our race. To speak of the art of printing, in its connection with morals and mind, would be as superfluous as it would be difficult to do justice to the topic. Its history is not so much an incident as the summary of modern civilization. Vast as the influence of this art of arts has been, it may well be doubted whether improvements will not yet be made in the mechanism connected with it, which will incalculably increase its efficiency. If I mistake not, the trumpet-voice of Truth from this machine is yet destined to reach to distances and depths of society, which have hitherto remained unexplored and neglected.

"Again, in reference to the intimate connection of the useful and mechanic arts with intellectual progress, let us but advert for a moment to the mariner's compass, the telescope, the quadrant. For myself, I never reflect upon their influence on the affairs of man, and remember that they are, after all, merely mechanical contrivances, without emotions of admiration bordering upon awe. This sentiment, I know, is so worn away by habit, that it seems almost to run into sentimentality. But let us not be ashamed to reproduce the emotions that spring from the freshness of truth and nature. What must not have been Galileo's feelings, when he pointed the first telescope to the heavens, and discovered the phases of Venus and the moons of Jupiter! When I behold the touched needle trembling to the pole,—when I know that, beneath the utter blackness of the midnight storm, when every star in heaven is quenched, and the laboring vessel, in mid-ocean, reels, like a drunken man, on the crested top of the mighty waves, that little bar of steel will guide the worn and staggering helmsman on his way, I feel that there is a holy philosophy in the arts of life, which, if I cannot comprehend, I can reverence.

"Consider the influence on the affairs of men, in all their relations, of the invention of the little machine which I hold in my hands; and the other modern instruments for the measurement of time, various specimens of which are on exhibition in the halls. To say nothing of the importance of an accurate measurement of time in astronomical observations,—nothing of the application of time-keepers to the purposes of navigation,—how vast must be the aggregate effect on the affairs of life, throughout the civilized world, and in the progress of ages, of a convenient and portable apparatus for measuring the lapse of time! Who can calculate in how many of those critical junctures when affairs of weightiest import hang upon the issue of an hour, Prudence and Forecast have triumphed over blind Casualty, by being enabled to measure with precision the flight of time, in its smallest subdivisions! Is it not something more than mere mechanism, which watches with us by the sick-bed of some dear friend, through the live-long solitude of night, enables us to count, in the slackening pulse, nature's trembling steps toward recovery, and to administer the prescribed remedy at the precise, perhaps the critical, moment of its application? By means of a watch, punctuality in all his duties,—which, in its perfection, is one of the incommunicable attributes of Deity,—is brought, in no mean measure, within the reach of man. He is enabled, if he will be guided by this half-rational machine, creature of a day as he is, to imitate that sublime precision which leads the earth, after a circuit of five hundred millions of miles, back to the solstice at the appointed moment, without the loss of one second, no, not the millionth part of a second, for the ages on ages during which it has travelled that empyreal road.* What a miracle of art, that a man can teach a few brass wheels, and a little piece of elastic steel, to out-calculate himself; to give him a rational answer to one of the most important questions which a being travelling toward eternity can ask! What a miracle, that a man can put within this little machine a spirit† that measures the flight of time with greater accuracy than the unassisted intellect of the profoundest philosopher; which watches and moves when sleep palsies alike the hand of the maker and the mind of the contriver, nay, when the last sleep has come over them both! I saw the other day, at Stockbridge, the watch which was worn on the 8th of September, 1755, by the unfortunate Baron Dieskau, who received his mortal wound on that day, near Lake George, at the head of his army of French and Indians, on the breaking out of the seven years' war. This watch, which marked the fierce, feverish moments of the battle as calmly as it has done the fourscore years which have since elapsed, is still going; but the watch-maker and baron have now for more than three-fourths of a century been gone where time is no longer counted. Frederic the Great was another and a vastly more important personage of the same war. His watch was carried away from Potsdam by Napoleon, who, on his rock in mid-ocean, was wont to ponder on the hours of alternate disaster and triumph, which filled up the life of his great fellow-destroyer, and had been equally counted on its dial-plate. The courtiers used to say, that this watch stopped of its own accord, when Frederic died. Short-sighted adulation! for if it stopped at his death, as if time was no longer worth measuring, it was soon put in motion, and went on, as if nothing had happened. Portable watches were probably introduced into England in the time of Shakspeare; and he puts one into the hands of his fantastic jester, as the text of his mortality. In truth, if we wished to borrow from the arts a solemn monition of the vanity of human things, the clock might well give it to us. How often does it not occur to the traveller in Europe, as he hears the hour tolled from some ancient steeple,—'that iron tongue in the tower of yonder old cathederal, unchanged itself, has had a voice for every change in the fortune of nations! It has chimed monarchs to their thrones, and knelled them to their tombs; and, from its watch-tower in the clouds, has, with the same sonorous and impartial stoicism, measured out their little hour of sorrow and gladness to coronation and funeral, abdication and accession, revolution and restoration; victory, tumult, and fire:'‡ and, with like faithfulness, while I speak, the little monitor by my side warns me back from my digression, and bids me beware lest I devote too much of my brief hour, even to its own commendation. Let me follow the silent monition, sustained, perhaps, by the impatience of the audience, and hasten to the last topic of my address."

Our last extract closes the address. Bright and grand as are its anticipations of future improvement, none can deny them to be rational. And it is difficult to perceive how any mechanic can hear, or read, the concluding paragraph, without a conscious increase of that self-respect, and that real elevation of character, with which the whole address tends to inspire him.

"So numerous are the inventions and discoveries that have been made in every department, and to such perfection have many arts been carried, that we may, perhaps, be inclined to think that, in the arts, as on the surface of the globe, after all the brilliant discoveries in navigation in the last three centuries, there is nothing left to find out. Though it is probable that, in particular things, no further progress can be made, (and even this I would not affirm, with any confidence,) yet so far from considering invention as exhausted, or art at a stand, I believe there never was a moment when greater improvements were to be expected: and this for the very reason that so much has already been done,—that truth, in its nature, is at once boundless and creative,—and that every existing art, invention, and discovery, is but an instrument of further improvement. Even when any particular art or machine seems to have reached the highest attainable point of excellence, nothing is more likely than that it will, by some wholly unexpected discovery or improvement, be greatly advanced; or that, by accidental or natural association, it will lead to some other very important improvement in a branch of art wholly dissimilar or, finally, that it will be superseded by something quite different, but producing the same result. Take, as an example, the art of printing. The simple process of printing with moveable types, and a press moved by hand, does not seem, in the lapse of four hundred years, to have undergone any very material improvement; but the introduction of solid plates, and the application of artificial power to the press, are improvements wholly disconnected, in their nature, from the art of printing, and yet adding incalculably to its efficacy and operative power. In a word, the products of art are the creations of rational mind, working with intelligent and diversified energy, in a thousand directions;—bounding from the material to the moral world, and back from speculation to life; producing the most wonderful effects on moral and social relations by material means, and again, in an improved political and moral condition, finding instruments and encouragement for new improvements in mechanical art. In this mighty action and reaction, we are continually borne on to results the most surprising. Physical and moral causes and effects produce moral and physical effects and causes, and every thing discovered tends to the discovery of something yet unknown. It rarely, perhaps never, happens that any discovery or invention is wholly original; as rarely, that it is final. As some portion of its elements lay in previously existing ideas, so it will awaken new conceptions in the inventive mind. The most novel mechanical contrivance contains within itself much that was known before; and the most seemingly perfect invention—if we may judge the future by the past—admits of further improvements. For this reason, the more that is known, discovered and contrived, the ampler the materials out of which new discoveries, inventions, and improvements, may be expected.

"Perfect as the steam engine seems, it is a general persuasion that we are in the rudiments of its economical uses. The prodigious advances made in the arts of locomotion, teach nothing more clearly, than the probability that they will be rendered vastly more efficient. The circulation of ideas by means of the press is probably destined to undergo great enlargement. Analytical chemistry has, within the last thirty years, acquired instruments which enable the philosopher to unlock mysteries of nature before unconceived of. Machinery of all kinds, and for every purpose, is daily simplified and rendered more efficient. Improved manipulations are introduced into all the arts, and each and all of these changes operate as efficient creative causes of further invention and discovery. Besides all that may be hoped for by the diligent and ingenious use of the materials for improvement afforded by the present state of the arts, the progress of science teaches us to believe that principles, elements and powers are in existence and operation around us, of which we have a very imperfect knowledge, perhaps no knowledge whatever. Commencing with the mariner's compass in the middle ages, a series of discoveries has been made connected with magnetism, electricity, galvanism, the polerity of light, and the electro-magnetic phenomena which are occupying so much attention at the present day, all of which are more or less applicable to the useful arts, and which may well produce the conviction that, if in some respects we are at the meridian, we are in other respects in the dawn of science. In short, all art, as I have said, is a creation of the mind of man—an essence of infinite capacity for improvement. And it is of the nature of every intelligence endowed with *such* a capacity, however mature in respect to the past, to be at all times, in respect to the future, in a state of hopeful infancy. However vast the space measured behind, the space before is immeasurable; and though the mind may estimate the progress it has made, the boldest stretch of its powers is inadequate to measure the progress of which it is capable.

Let me say, then, Mr. President, and gentlemen of the Mechanic Association,—PERSEVERE. Do any ask what you have done, and what you are doing for the public good? Send them to your exhibition rooms; and let them see the walls of the temple of American Liberty,* fitly covered with the products of American art. And while they gaze with admiration on these creations of the mechanical arts of the country, bid them remember that they are the productions of a people whose fathers were told by the British ministry they should not manufacture a hob-nail! Does any one ask in disdain for the great names which have illustrated the Mechanic Arts! Tell him of Arkwright, and Watt, of Franklin, of Whitney, and Fulton, whose memory will dwell in the grateful recollections of posterity, when the titled and laurelled destroyers of mankind shall be remembered only with detestation. Mechanics of America, respect your calling, respect yourselves. The cause of human improvement has no firmer or more powerful friends. In the great Temple of Nature, whose foundation is the earth,—whose pillars are the eternal hills,—whose roof is the star-lit sky,—whose organ-tones are the whispering breeze and the sounding storm,—whose architect is God,—there is no ministry more sacred than that of the intelligent mechanic!"

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* An Address delivered before the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association, 20th September, 1837, on occasion of their first exhibition and fair. By Edward Everett, honorary member of the Association. Boston: Dutton and Wentworth—1837.

* Lardner's Popular Lectures on the Steam Engine, p. 61. Dr. Lardner, in the context of the passage above quoted, speaks of the notion of "separate condensation" as the "happy conception which formed the first step of that brilliant career which has immortalized the name of Watt, and which has spread his fame to the very skirts of civilization."

† In his first volume of his Philosophy of the Human Mind.

* It is not, of course, intended that the sidereal year is always of precisely the same length, but that its variations are subject to a fixed law. See *Sir Jno. Herschel's Treatise on Astronomy*, §563.

† Inclusus variis famulatus spiritus astris
Et vivum certis motibus urget opus.
Claudian. in Sphær. Archimides.

‡ The associations here alluded to have lately been rendered familiar to the public by the Mayor's spirited translation and adaptation to music of Schiller's splendid poem of *The Bell*. The idea was originally glanced at in one of Mrs. Elizabeth Montague's Letters.

* The exhibition was held in Faneuil Hall.—[*Ed. Mes.*

The following capital hit is from the New England Galaxy—the best literary paper, by the way, that we know of:

A FIRST APPEARANCE.

On Monday night, the celebrated dog Bruin, belonging to Mr. G. H. Andrews, made his first appearance as "The dog of Montargis." From the rumored talent of this performer, it is but fair to state that great expectations were formed—which were fully realized. Constant applause greeted the new candidate for fame, and at the fall of the curtain, cries of "Bruin! Bruin!" resounded from all sides. Obedient to the call, the star of the evening came forth, wagged his tail, first at the boxes, then at the pit, and then at the gallery; and after a significant bark, he popped himself on his hind legs, and delivered the following significant speech:

Ladies and gentlemen of Boston:—There cannot be a greater insult to a performer, than to call him out, as it is termed. In the first place, it isn't promised in the bill. In the second place, it is no compliment, because you call out every body, good, bad, and indifferent. In the third place, you will often neglect a talented man, and let him play to bare walls during the whole engagement, and then call him out—as in the case of Mr. Vandenhoff—and then call him out, for what? To get a good stare at him, and have your self-esteem flattered with salvy words about your "generosity," and "liberal patronage," and your being the "Athens of America," and all that fiddle-dee on your patronage! You would'nt be caught in a theatre, unless you felt sure you would get your money's worth, and if a poor actor makes a blunder, you goose him and cat-call him without mercy—and because he has merit enough to win his way, he must come before the curtain and humbly thank you. Shame on you for the little consideration you show in this paltry custom! Some actors, no doubt, are fond of showing themselves before the curtain, and creating an excitation, as my friend George Jones would say, but the high minded are indignant, and would not obey, were they not afraid that you, in your brilliant sense of republican freedom, would pull the house down about the manager's ears. You never could get a word out of Miss Tree or Vandenhoff—more praise to them. They came forward through necessity, but said nothing, through contempt. I myself should not have gratified you by a sight of my corporeal frame divested of the stage accompaniments, did I not mean to give you here, a good dressing. Now that we of the canine race are beginning to star it, and raise up a legitimate drama, in the place of your howdy dowdy stuff, we shall have another guess sort of work—we shant come forward when you call us—and if you does hiss and be obstropolous at not getting what you ought to be ashamed to ask for, a lot of us will spring among your legs, and with our teeth make you set up such a yelling, as shall be heard at the top of the unfinished monument, which your lollypop patriotism began. Shame on you!

Bruin here showed his teeth, and the confounded multitude dispersed.

AN INVITATION TO DINNER.—It was observed that a certain covetous rich man never invited any one to dine with him. "I'll lay a wager," said a wag, "I get an invitation from him." The wager being accepted, he goes the next day to the rich man's house, about the time he was known to dine, and tells the servant that he must speak with his master immediately, for that he can save him a thousand pounds. "Sir," said the servant to his master, "here is a man in a great hurry to speak with you; who says he can save you a thousand pounds." Out comes the master. "What is that you say, Sir—that you can save me a thousand pounds?" "Yes, Sir, I can—but I see you are at dinner; I will go myself and dine, and call again." "O pray, Sir, come in and take dinner with me." "Sir, I shall be troublesome." "Not at all." The invitation was accepted. As soon as dinner was over, and the family retired, "Well, sir," said the man of the house, "now to our business. Pray let me know how I am to save this thousand pounds?" "Why, sir," said the other, "I hear you have a daughter to dispose of in marriage," "I have." "And that you intend to portion her with ten thousand pounds." "I do so." "Why, then, sir, let me have her, and I will take her for nine thousand." The master of the house rose in a passion and turned him out of doors.

To that portion of our fair subscribers that are candidates for matrimony, we would recommend an attentive perusal of the *requisite* qualifications subjoined.—

Qualifications for Matrimony.—No woman ought to be permitted to enter upon the duties of connubiality, without being able to make a shirt, mend a coat, seat unwhisperables, bake a loaf of bread, roast a joint of meat, broil a steak, make a pudding, and manufacture frocks and et ceteras for little responsibilities.—*Red River Gazette.*